

Message Text

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43

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INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

LUSAKA FOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: TUCSA INVITED AFL-CIO TO SEND FACT-FINDING MISSION TO
SOUTH AFRICA

1. WHILE IN U.S. TO ATTEND RECENT USSALEP CONFERENCE TUCSA
GENERAL SECRETARY GROBBELAAR VISITED AALC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
O'FARRELL IN NEW YORK AND AFL-CIO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR LEE IN WASHINGTON FOR PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING POSSI-
BILITY OF OBTAINING AFL-CIO ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING
COMPREHENSIVE MULTI-RACIAL TRADE UNION EDUCATION PROGRAM
IN SOUTH AFRICA.

2. PRINCIPAL RESULT OF MEETINGS WAS AGREEMENT THAT
GROBBELAAR, UPON RETURN TO JOHANNESBURG, WOULD EXTEND OFFICIAL
INVITATION TO AFL-CIO TO SEND FACT-FINDING MISSING TO SOUTH
AFRICA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. FULL TEXT OF TUCSA'S LETTER
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OF INVITATION TO DIRECTOR LEE FOLLOWS. WE CONSIDER IT
SIGNIFICANT THAT SUB-PARAGRAPH (B) CONTAINS TUCSA'S ASSURANCE

THAT "IT CAN BE REASONABLY EXPECTED THAT ANY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME WHICH SEEKS TO EDUCATE THE AFRICANS IN DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES RELATIVE TO THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT WILL NOT INCUR A HOSTILE REACTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT."

QTE 25 OCTOBER, 1974; DEAR BROTHER LEE; RE: TRADE UNION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME IN SOUTH AFRICA.

QTE I AM WRITING ON BEHALF OF TUCSA TO OFFICIALLY REQUEST THE ASSISTANCE OF THE AFL-CIO IN THE INTRODUCTION OF A PRACTICAL & MEANINGFUL TRADE UNION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME IN SOUTH AFRICA.

QTE I WISH TO REITERATE THE POINTS MADE BY ME AT THE MEETING HELD IN YOUR OFFICE IN WASHINGTON ON THE 10TH OF OCTOBER, AT WHICH BROTHER O'FARRELL OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN LABOR CENTER, & BROTHER R.C. WEBB OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MOTOR INDUSTRY COMBINED WORKERS' UNION, WERE PRESENT, TOGETHER WITH YOU AND I.

QTE (A) THERE IS A DESPERATE NEED FOR A PRACTICAL, MEANINGFUL, AND WIDE RANGING TRADE UNION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME TO BE STARTED WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE DELAY. THE AFRICAN WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE BEING ORGANISED INTO TRADE UNIONS AT AN EVER INCREASING RATE, AND THEIR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE APPERTAINING TO TRADE UNIONISM, BOTH IN TERMS OF TRADE UNION PHILOSOPHY & ADEQUATE SKILLS TO ENSURE THAT HEALTHY, DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONISM IS PRACTICED, IS VIRTUALLY NEGLIGIBLE.

QTE (B) THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA IS VERY FLEXIBLE. TRADITIONAL ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES ARE CHANGING RAPIDLY AND THERE IS GENERALLY AN ACCEPTANCE AMONGST THE ESTABLISHED TRADE UNION MOVEMENT (AS ALSO AMONGST A LARGE SECTION OF THE EMPLOYERS) THAT NOT ONLY IS AFRICAN PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION ACTIVITY IMMINENT, BUT ALSO DESIRABLE, PROVIDING SUCH ACTIVITY CONFORMS TO DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES. EVEN GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA ACCEPTS THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHING BETTER CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE EMPLOYERS AND AFRICAN WORKERS, AND IN MY OPINION, IS BASICALLY DESIROUS OF FURTHER IMPROVING THE PRESENT INADEQUATE FORMS OF REPRESENTATION FOR THE AFRICAN WORKERS.
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IT CAN BE REASONABLY EXPECTED THAT ANY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME WHICH SEEKS TO EDUCATE THE AFRICANS IN DEMOCRATIC PRODEDURES RELATIVE TO THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT, WILL NOT INCUR A HOSTILE REACTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

QTE (C) UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS ARE STARTING TO MOVE INTO THE FIELD OF TRADE UNION EDUCATION, AS ALSO BEING ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF TRADE UNION ORGANISING. WITHOUT DOUBT, THEY ARE BASICALLY CONCERNED ONLY WITH THE POLITICAL EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKERS, AND INTEND TO USE THEM AS AN INSTRUMENT TO CREATE

A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION OF ANARCHY AND CHAOS.

QTE TUCSA, THROUGH RECENT AMENDMENTS TO ITS CONSTITUTION, WILL NOW AGAIN BE ADMITTING AFRICANS TO ITS RANKS, AND THUS CATERING FOR THEIR NEEDS & REQUIREMENTS. AS SUCH, A WORTH-WHILE PROGRAMME OF TRADE UNION EDUCATION IS SEEN AS AN URGENT PRIORITY. HOWEVER, WE DO BELIEVE THAT THE PROGRAMME MUST BE AS BROADLY BASED AS POSSIBLE, AND SHOULD INVOLVE NOT ONLY MEMBERS OF ALL RACIAL GROUPS IN SOUTH AFRICA, BUT SHOULD ALSO INVOLVE VARIOUS OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS WHICH ARE CONCERNED WITH THIS QUESTION. THESE INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS OBVIOUSLY RANGE THROUGH THE BROAD SPECTRUM OF CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL EXPRESSION IN SOUTH AFRICA, IN BOTH THE ACADEMIC AND TRADE UNION FIELDS.

QTE IT IS URGENTLY REQUESTED THAT, IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHAT IS NEEDED FOR INTRODUCING A WORTHWHILE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME IN SOUTH AFRICA, DESIGNED TO EQUIP MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP FOR MEANINGFUL TRADE UNION ACTIVITY, A FACT-FINDING MISSION FROM THE AFL-CIO SHOULD VISIT SOUTH AFRICA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THEY COULD MAKE AN ON-THE-SPOT ASSESSMENT OF WHAT IS REQUIRED, HOW IT CAN BE PROVIDED, AND THE MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO MAKE THE PROJECT A REALITY.

QTE I WOULD EMPHASISE THAT ANY DELAY WILL BE DISASTROUS, SINCE TIME HAS DEFINITELY RUN OUT. IF A BROADLY BASED DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION MOVEMENT CONSISTING OF ALL RACIAL GROUPS IS TO EMERGE IN SOUTH AFRICA, THEN QUICK ACTION MUST BE TAKEN. A FAILURE TO RESPOND WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY RESULT IN WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS BEING CREATED WHICH WILL MOST DEFINITELY NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THE DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES OF THE WESTERN WORLD'S
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TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

QTE YOUR SINCERELY AND FRATEERNALLY, J.A. GROBBELAAR, GENERAL SECRETARY. UNQTE
GUTHRIE

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